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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews the history of gifted education in the United States since the late 1800's, with particular emphasis on reading and reading instruction. Definitional issues are examined, and the impact of social forces upon the changing conceptions of the population is analyzed. The history of gifted services begins with the writings of F. Galton and continues through early programing efforts in Cleveland and St. Louis, the beginnings of advanced placement courses, and prototype early intervention approaches. A section on research notes trends while another section comments on possible causes for the renewed interest in gifted education as well as the potential for a decline in interest in the years to come. Research on the kinds of reading experiences and instructon needed by gifted students is considered. The importance of teaching critical and creative reading is stressed. (CL)

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AN HISTORICAL LOOK AT GIFTED EDUCATION AS IT RELATES TO READING PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED

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INTRODUCTION

What is "gifted?" Who is "gifted?" Why does it matter? A Dictionary of Reading and Related Terms (1982) defines "gifted" as

> having special talents or skills,...having superior intellectual functioning or potential,... having so much intellectual, creative, artistic, or athletic potential as to need distinctive educational programs or services.

Why do the "gifted" need "distinctive educational programs or services?"

The answers to all these questions lie in the past but will impact the future. This paper will briefly explore the history of gifted education in the United States since the late 1800's and will take special note of reading for the gifted, both historically and in terms of present and future needs.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of who is considered talented and gifted change as a society's needs change. Social need helps specify who and how many are deemed gifted and talented (Sellin & Birch, 1980).

> The definition of talent in a primitive tribe is likely to be quite simple. Where the tribe depends primarily on hunting wild game for survival, the definition of talent will focus on the ability to become an outstanding hunter.

> To the warring tribe, the ability to carry battle to the enemy is most prized.
>
> Even nations which produced men whose brilliant insights and ideas are still recognized today had a limited view of man's talents. The Greeks honored the orator and the artist--but failed to appreciate the inventor. Rome cherished the soldier and the administrator--but failed to recognize the many other potential talents of either its citizens or its slaves (Flanagan, Dailey, Shaycroft, Gorham, Orr, & Goldberg, 1962, in Gallagher, 1975, p. 10)

The prevailing culture's values also determine the areas in which talented or gifted persons may be recognized (Renzulli, 1978). In light of this, the following definitions are offered.

Renzulli (1978) says that over the years, there have been numerous conceptions and countless definitions of giftedness put forth. Most can be analyzed on a continuum which ranges from "conservative" to "liberal" depending on the degree of restrictiveness used to determine eligibility for special services and programs for the gifted. The definition can be restrictive by limiting the number of performance areas (e.g. academic only, excluding music, leadership, social service, creative writing, etc.), or it can be restrictive by the degree or level of excellence one must attain to be considered gifted.

The definitions of giftedness in the late 1800's and early 1900's were conservative in terms of the above criteria. They dealt only with intelligence,

especially as measured by I.Q. tests. Lewis Terman's definition of giftedness (1921) was "the top 1% level in general intellectual ability, as measured by the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale or a comparable instrument" (Renzulli, 1978; Torrance, 1981). Prior to World War II, only the top 1-2% were considered gifted, but after 1940, the definition of gifted was expanded to include the top 10-15% (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957). Some educational researchers advocated using a broader definition of gifted that would include 10-20%, still in terms of I.Q. (reported by Havighurst, Hersey, Meister, Cornog, & Terman, 1958). They felt that society would benefit from the developed talents of this larger group. Gallagher (1960) referred to the top 15-20% of the general school population as "academically talented" (I.Q. 116+). He called the top 2-4% of the population "gifted" (I.Q. 132+). The "highly gifted" group was about one-tenth of 1% of the general population (I.Q. 148+).

By the late 1950's, the terms "gifted" and "high I.Q." had become synonymous. But,

> despite the longevity, there is nothing inevitable about the use of the I.Q. in defining giftedness. Indeed, it may be argued that in many ways this definition is only an historical happenstance--a consequence of the fact that early inquiries in this field had as their context the classroom and its attendant concern with academic progress (Getzels & Jackson, 1958).

Nevertheless, consideration of a person's I.Q. score has remained in nearly every definition of giftedness since it was first conceived in the early 1920's, up through the early 1980's. Although an exact score demarcation may not always be referred to, it may be alluded to, as in Hollingworth's (1926) definition: "Gifted children are those identified by mental tests as very superior to the average" (p. 31).

As early as 1930, some people began to call for a broader definition of gifted than just in terms of I.Q. Witty expanded the definition to include "any child whose performance in a worthwhile type of human endeavor is consistently or repeatedly remarkable" (Witty, 1971, p. 2). He proposed this expanded definition because he felt that the intelligence tests did not successfully identify those students with a high potential for creative expression (Witty, 1971). He believed that it was evident that intelligence tests did not elicit any kind of imaginative, original, or unique response. Witty, along with many others believed that ignoring the creative students would be an injustice to them and to society.

In 1957, DeHaan and Havighurst said any child would be considered gifted "who is superior in some ability that can make him an outstanding contributor to the welfare of, and quality of living in, society" (p. 15).

This seems to have been the first time that making some sort of contribution to society was included in a definition for determining giftedness. Hollingworth (1926), though, already assumed that gifted youngsters would grow up to be gifted adults and would make great contributions. She said, "Individuals of surpassing intelligence create national wealth, determine the state of industry, advance science, and make general culture possible" (p. 297). She felt, therefore, that identifying and providing for gifted students were social obligations.

In 1959, Fliegler and Bish reviewed the literature on the gifted from 1953-1959. Their definition of

> the term gifted encompasses those children who possess a superior intellectual potential and functional ability to achieve academically in the top 15-20% of the school population; and/or talent of a high order in such special areas as mathematics, mechanics, science, expressive arts, creative writing, music, and social leadership; and a unique creative ability to deal with their environment" (p. 409).

This definition was the first to mention potential. All previous definitions used some outward sign of "remarkableness" or a measurable trait to prove that a person was gifted. The idea of including "potential" in the definitions continued, especially as educators realized that probably they were missing a significant number of persons capable of making contributions to the nation.

> Each generation gives new form to the aspirations that shape education in its time. What may be emerging as a mark of our own generation is a widespread renewal of concern for the quality and intellectual aims of education--but without abandonment of the ideal that education should serve as a means of training well-balanced citizens for a democracy (Bruner, 1960, p. 1).

Fliegler and Bish's 1959 definition was also significant in that it listed specific "special areas of talent," at a time when the country was realizing that it had fallen behind Russia.

In 1960, the gifted were defined as,

> those who possess a superior central nervous system characterized by the potential to perform tasks requiring a comparatively high degree of intellectual abstraction or creative imagination or both (Sumption & Luecking, 1960, p. 6).

Lucito, in 1963, said that,

> the gifted are those students whose potential intellectual powers are at such a high ideational level in both productive and evaluative thinking that it can be reasonably assumed they could be the future problem solvers, innovators, and evaluators of the culture if adequate educational experiences are provided (in Muia, 1982, p. 11).

Both of these definitions, from the early 1960's, seemed to focus on "thinking" abilities--in a creative, abstract, problem-solving mode. Definitions do indeed reflect the times; these came out of a time when the nation was realizing its needs for thinkers and problem-solvers.

In Sidney P. Marland's (United States Commissioner

of Education) report to Congress, the following definition was established:

> Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.
>
> Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:
>
> 1) general intellectual ability
>
> 2) specific academic aptitude
>
> 3) creative or productive thinking
>
> 4) leadership ability
>
> 5) visual and performing arts
>
> 6) psychomotor ability

Marland's definition included many aspects of its forerunners: achievement, potential, specific areas, etc. It was the first time, however, that "professionally qualified persons" were mentioned, possibly because some of them worked on the definition, or because the 1960's produced a plethora of psychometricians, etc., or because it was needed in the definition --but it makes the definition a rather circular one.

It was also the first time that psychomotor ability was mentioned. Both before and after this

definition, getting people to provide "differentiated education" for those gifted in psychomotor ability has not been a problem. In 1958, Havighurst, Hersey, Meister, Cornog, and Terman wrote that,

> the American public accepts without question the right of the best athletes to represent their school while the rest can cheer them on to victory. This is the pattern of democracy. Strangely, that does not seem to be democracy's attitude toward the best minds and toward intellectual giftedness (p. 11).

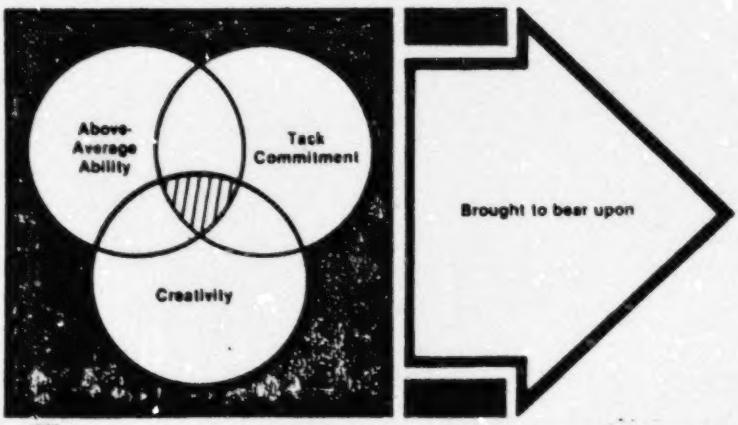
Marland's definition was quite different from the one which followed.

Renzulli (1978) said that,

> giftedness consists of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits--these clusters being above-average general abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those possessing or capable of developing this composite set of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. Children who manifest or are capable of developing an interaction among the three clusters require a wide variety of educational opportunities and services that are not ordinarily provided through regular instructional programs (p. 184).

Renzulli's definition was broader in one sense, and narrower in another. It was broader in that it included many general performance areas (see next page for diagram) and an endless number of specific performance areas. Its narrowness came from the requirement that the gifted reside in the interesection of the three traits that Renzulli said comprised a gifted

Figure 2. A Graphic Definition of Giftedness


Above-Average Ability
Task Commitment
Creativity
Brought to bear upon
GENERAL PERFORMANCE AREAS
Mathematics • Visual Arts • Physical Sciences • Philosophy • Social Sciences • Law • Religion • Language Arts • Music • Life Sciences • Movement Arts
SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE AREAS
Cartooning • Astronomy • Public Opinion Polling • Jewelry Design • Map Making • Choreography • Biography • Film Making • Statistics • Local History • Electronics • Musical Composition • Landscape Architecture • Chemistry • Demography • Microphotography • City Planning • Pollution Control • Poetry • Fashion Design • Weaving • Play Writing • Advertising • Costume Design • Meteorology • Puppetry • Marketing • Game Design • Journalism • Electronic Music • Child Care • Consumer Protection • Cooking • Ornithology • Furniture Design • Navigation • Genealogy • Sculpture • Wildlife Management • Set Design • Agricultural Research • Animal Learning • Film Criticism • Etc • Etc • Etc

Renzulli (1978)

person. Creativity alone does not make a gifted person; above-average ability alone does not make a gifted person; task commitment alone does not make a gifted person--neither do any two of the above in combination--all three must interact. This definition has caught on among some of the personages of gifted education, but at the grass roots level, in the public schools, it is not a popular one for the obvious reason that it is too restrictive and would cut some gifted programs at least in half. School districts prefer the 1980, Title IX definition.

In 1980, Title IX, Part A, of Public Law 95-561, said that gifted and talented were

> children, and where applicable, youth, who are identified at the preschool, elementary, or secondary level as possessing demonstrated

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> or potential abilities that give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, specific academic, or leadership, or in the performing and visual arts, and who by reason thereof require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school (Sellin & Birch, 1980, p. 22).

This definition was a throwback to some previous ones; it was more general than other recent definitions. The only real difference was that it mentioned identification at the preschool, elementary, and/or secondary level. It was not until fairly recently that educators began to see the value in early identification programs for exceptional children at both ends of the spectrum (i.e. gifted and the mentally handicapped), so this inclusion was a significant marker of the times.

Also in 1980, Drews said,

> the gifted, in my view, can be simply defined as those who show themselves, in relation both to their age group and to all others, as more fully human. This means that they reach intellectual, aesthetic, and moral heights, and that they show insights and sensitivities in those areas which others do not (p. 32).

This definition will probably not go down in history as one of great utility and clarity. This type of definition makes it possible for nearly everyone to be gifted in one way or another, and that defeats the whole idea of giftedness.

The progression of definitions goes from a strictly numberically based I.Q. score including only the top

1%, to including the top 20% in I.Q., to including those who exhibit some sort of consistently remarkable trait, to those who are "more human" and can make some sort of contribution to society--not just in terms of an intellectual feat, but in terms of helping solve society's woes. There seems to be a desire of late, not to leave anyone out who might need the differentiated services required by the "talented and gifted," and, to come up with some kind of definition which will serve in every arena--psychological, political, and educational.

> The literature reflects continuous efforts to construct a definition of the gifted that will gain more widespread acceptance. Agreement on one basic definition has not been achieved, but there are definite common denominators of all the various definitions offered. In its most simple form, one may define intellectual giftedness as exceptional potential for learning and a superior capacity to assimilate, manipulate, and utilize abstract concepts and factual information. Superior abilities related to cognitive processing--for example, comprehending, organizing, retaining, transferring, utilizing information in problem-solving--are the basis of intellectual giftedness. These cognitive abilities contribute to the individual's exceptional ability to perceive relationships between ideas or events, to gain influence over the environment, and to become an independent, critical thinker and a leader. "Gifted" children generally refers to those possessing exceptional potential for academic success and productive intellectual pursuits (Whitmore, 1980, p. 61).

Undoubtably, the perfect definition has not yet been found--but as interest in the gifted and research

of the same continues, so will efforts to pin down the group.

HISTORY OF GIFTED EDUCATION

The quest for the ideal definition has gone on for several decades.

> Any definition of talent must have a social reference. Man is capable of mastering an almost endless variety of skills, but it remains for society to judge which shall be regarded as high-level talent (Tannenbaum, 1958, p. 22).

By looking back over the events and attitudes of the past one hundred (plus) years, one can see what was valued and what was judged as high-level talent.

In relatively recent history, interest in the gifted child seems to have sprung from the publication of Sir Francis Galton's book, Hereditary Genius in 1869 (Stanley, 1977; Witty, 1958). Galton considered heredity the prime determinant of intellectual ability (Tannenbaum, 1958).

Prior to 1870, St. Louis established a program which allowed able students to complete eight grades in less than eight years--a sort of flexible promotion (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957). The man responsible for the first comprehensive plan to introduce flexibility in the graded program for able students was Dr. W.T. Harris, Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools.

He believed that it would hold "bright pupils up to the work of which they are capable and keep them from acquiring habits of carelessness and listlessness" (Henry, 1920, p. 12).

In 1886, Elizabeth, New Jersey initiated an accelerated, multiple track system for the gifted (Abraham, 1976). The Cambridge Double Track Plan, begun in 1891, allowed bright students to complete six grades in four years (third grade through ninth grade) (Abraham, 1976). According to Henry (1920), the plan employed special "coach" teachers to help those students who appeared capable of doing the allotted amount of work in less than the allotted amount of time.

Another early flexible promotion plans was the Woburn, Massachusetts "Double Tillage Plan" which was started in 1884.

> In this plan the year's work for each grade was covered in the first half-year, and then gone over again in greater detail during the second half-year, an arrangement which made it possible for bright pupils to be promoted at the middle of the year, thereby doing two years' work in one (Henry, 1920, p. 17).

Although there were the aforementioned attempts to provide for the abler students before 1900,

> extensive investigations of the gifted were not undertaken then because of the following considerations:
>
> 1. The influence of current beliefs, partaking of the nature of superstitions, regarding the essential nature of the Great Man, who has

> commonly been regarded by the masses as qualitatively set off from the rest of mankind, the product of supernatural causes, and moved by forces which are not to be explained by the natural laws of human behavior.
>
> 2. The widespread belief, hardly less superstitious in its origin, that intellectual precocity is pathological.
>
> 3. The vigorous growth of democratic sentiment in western Europe and in America during the last few hundred years, which has necessarily tended to encourage an attitude unfavorable to a just appreciation of native individual differences in human endowment.
>
> 4. The tardy birth of the biological sciences, particularly genetics, and of the sciences of psychology and education (Witty, 1958, pp. 42-43).

Many of the misconceptions about the gifted stemmed from the work of two men: Lombroso and Nisbet. Their respective books, The Man of Genius and The Insanity of Genius, both published in 1895, told of their attempts to study and prove that insanity and genius were closely related (Barbe & Renzulli, 1981). Even in the 1980's, the term genius is still avoided because it is "historically shrouded in mystery and charged with negative emotional connotations" (Tannenbaum, 1958, p. 26). Much of this is due to the earlier myths propounded by Nisbet and Lombroso.

Although intensive study into the gifted was not undertaken prior to the early 1900's, there were those interested in measuring intelligence and differentiating between individuals of high intelligence and individuals

of low intelligence. In France, at the beginning of the twentieth century, A. Binet and T. Simon developed a scale to measure "judgement." The resultant score was called "Mental Age," and it "was intended to discriminate between children who were educable and those who were not capable of academic learning" (Whitmore, 1980, p. 12). In the United States, Terman worked on refining this scale and after several years, had adapted it in such a way that it could measure both subnormal and supernormal intelligence (as well as "normal").

Just as some attempts were made to provide for gifted students in the late 1800's, such efforts continued in the early 1900's. In 1900, New York City began its "rapid-progress classes" which made it possible for students to complete three years of junior high in two years (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957). All prior provisions for abler students had been within regular schools, with able students being served by special classes, but in 1901, the first special school for gifted students was established in Worcester, Massachusetts. It was called a "preparatory school" and was for grades seven through nine (McDonald, 1915).

Even though the school in Worcester was established early in the century, it was many years before other schools offering a full program were initiated. The

main alternative for the brighter students was acceleration (through grade skipping). This was primarily the case from 1900-1920 (Tannenbaum, 1958).

One new approach was offered by Los Angeles in 1915. Its attempt to provide for its gifted students was through enrichment in "opportunity classes" which were comprised of the top 5% or so of the school population. The students in the opportunity classes were "given individualized instruction and allowed to make the rapid progress for which their native endowment fits them" (Washburne, 1918, p. 39).

During this same period of time, the intelligence test was becoming more widely used. Largely because of "Army Alpha," a group intelligence test given to thousands of soldiers enlisting to fight in World War I, the term I.Q. became familiar to many citizens. Soon after the war, most "up-to-date" school systems used intelligence testing in some form, and to some degree (Gowan, 1977).

With the advent of widespread intelligence testing, children who showed up as different from the norm did receive some attention, but by far, those at the lower end of the scale received more attention. In 1899, one hundred large cities had special education classes for the mentally deficient and by the early 1920's, two-thirds of all large cities had special education

classes (albeit in basements and dark halls) (Abraham, 1976).

A few people realized that the bright students were not being provided for. The Women's City Club of Cleveland asked the Cleveland school board what the schools were doing for their gifted children--and out of the answer to that question came the "Cleveland Major Works Classes" in 1922 (Norris, 1958), but "almost nobody seemed to notice" (Abraham, 1976, p. 5). A few other special classes were formed in California, Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania, but the movement did not really spread because many communities had inadequate numbers of gifted students and

> because of the prevailing attitude which led to a fear of the creation of an intellectually elite group through special attention to the gifted. Moreover, many administrators believed that the gifted pupil could take care of himself (Witty, 1971, p. 110).

There was, however, more attention paid to the gifted during the 1920's than at any other previous time in American education. This was partly due to the economic growth and expansion which occurred during that decade (Adler, 1967).

The 1920's were also a milestone decade because Lewis M. Terman began his monumental longitudinal study during the 1921-22 school year. The original funding for the study (a total of $34,000) (Terman,

1924) came from a grant from the Commonwealth Fund of New York City (Terman, 1981). He collected a group of 1528 children from the California schools with I.Q.'s over 140. His research continued even after his death in the early 1970's. Many of his findings dispelled earlier beliefs about gifted persons. For example,

> 1. Intellectually gifted children, either because of better endowment or better physical care, or both, are as a group slightly superior to the generality of children in health and physique and tend to remain so.
>
> 2. Children above 140 I.Q. are not as a group characterized by intellectual one-sidedness, emotional instability, lack of sociality or of social adaptability, or other types of maladjusted personality.
>
> 3. Indeed, in practically every personality and character trait such children average much better than the general school population.
>
> 4. In social-intelligence ratings, social interests, and play activities, gifted children as a group are either normal or superior. (Hollingworth, Terman, Oden, 1940, p. 67).

In 1930, a survey of cities of over 10,000 people was done. The survey revealed that only 30 out of 762 school districts had special classes for the gifted (Tannenbaum, 1958). The 1920's provisions for the gifted were characterized by homogeneous grouping of the top third of the students and then accelerating those classes (Tannenbaum, 1958). After 1930, this practice declined and enrichment, both in the regular classes and in special classes, became more popular (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957; Tannenbaum, 1958).

The interest in the gifted exhibited in the 1920's, along with the economic support, declined substantially in the 1930's. Although there was some variance, the 1930's were "characterized by unemployment, business failures, and general economic depression" (Adler, 1967, p. 477). The climate in the United States towards gifted education altered.

> Public interest in the gifted diminished and, in many cases, reversed itself into negativism. This was the period when special provisions for the gifted student became equated with the building of an elite and was believed to be undemocratic in the public mind (Adler, 1967, p. 476).

Bright people were looked upon with suspicion and vestiges of the notion that genius and mental illness were almost one in the same grew. In the 1930's, genetic genius was attributed to bastardization and racial mixture (Whitmore, 1980).

This attitude prevailed until World War II started. The war caused two things to happen:

1. a need was created for highly trained personnel and
2. the economy improved (Adler, 1967)

Two notable organizations were formed after World War II. The American Association for Gifted Children was established in 1946 to foster interest in the education of the gifted (Witty, 1971). Then, in 1948, the National Scholarship Service and Fund

for Negro students was started. Its purpose was to encourage able Black students and to increase their opportunities in interracial colleges and universities (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957).

Financial aid for able students continued in the 1950's. In 1956, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation conducted its first screening program and as a result of that screening, awarded 556 scholarships to bright students (Witty, 1967, 1971).

One of eight trends in gifted education articulated by Fliegler and Bish in 1959, was increased funding for research into gifted education. Three major experiments were sponsored in 1953 and 1954 by the Fund for the Advancement of Education:

> 1. The Study of General Education in School and College, which documented the waste and duplication that occur when strong schools offer challenging programs for abler students and when these efforts are not articulated with the work of the first two years of college (i.e. good high schools may be ahead of some colleges).
>
> 2. The second study dealt with the early admission to college and showed that, given the right circumstances, able students could enter college a year or two early and successfully undertake the academic work. Early admission, however, misjudged the mood of high schools. It failed to recognize that the schools were not willing to admit their inability to deal with able students, because they depended on them to set the pace for the rest of the students. This position of the high schools was reinforced by the finding from the early admission study which revealed that academic talent and emotional maturity

> do not always develop at an even rate. There were good grounds to believe that the place for the able student of high school age was in school, with other students of his own age.
>
> 3. The School and College Study of Admission with Advanced Standing and its successor, the Advanced Placement Program rest on the belief that schools could, if they would, offer work of college caliber; that able students could handle such work in the twelfth grade and, occassionally, earlier; and that schools and colleges together could devise the mechanisms to get the job done in the schools and get it recognized in the colleges (Pearson, 1961, from Forward).

Thus, Advanced Placement courses were born. It was a significant event because it recognized that the needs of able, college bound students were not being met under the current system.

Many people think that it was not until Sputnik that educators and others recognized the hiatus between bright students' abilities and American schools' provisions for them. But, this was not the case, as evidenced by the Advanced Placement Program and by a statement made in 1950 by the Educational Policies Commission. The Commission "decried the schools' neglect of mentally superior children" (Tannenbaum, 1981, p. 21). Tannenbaum also reports that in 1954, Wolfe, Director of the Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training, called for better preparation of bright young people. He encouraged them to go into the natural sciences, the health fields, teaching, and

engineering. He lamented the fact that only six out of ten students in the top 5% of their high school class and only one-half of the top 25% of high school graduates went on to earn their college diplomas (Tannenbaum, 1981).

The "explosion of interest in the gifted student" (Adler, 1967, p. 22) in the late 1950's was

> partly the result of a demand for greater numbers of people with highly developed economic skills to meet the needs of postwar economic expansion superposed on the increasing complexity of modern society (Havighurst, Hersey, Meister, Cornog, & Terman, 1958, p. 3).

But, it was largely due to the Russian's launching of Sputnik. After Sputnik, there were many "crash" programs and courses, but most did not last long (Tannenbaum, 1981).

During the 1950's, there had been talk of a "wastage of talent," but Havighurst, et al (1958) contend it could more accurately be called a "shortage of trained talent." To meet this shortage, there was what Tannenbaum (1981) called a "period of total talent mobilization" (p. 25). This period stimulated eight trends:

1. curriculum development
2. expansion of the definition of giftedness
3. acceleration
4. expansion of college and university programs for teacher training

5. increase in research and funding for research

6. closer look at Blacks, women, and low socioeconomic status gifted students

7. increased funding at state and national level

8. increase in local programs (Fliegler and Bish, 1959, p. 408).

Until 1958, only Pennsylvania had special licensing for teachers of the gifted (Tannenbaum, 1958). Hebeler (in Fliegler and Bish, 1959) reported that Delaware and Indiana established requirements for special certification of teachers of the gifted in 1958.

The trends noted by Fliegler and Bish continued into the 1960's. Research into, and encouragement of, gifted students expanded. In 1960, Project Talent began to collect data representative of students nation-wide in grades nine through twelve. Their purpose was to determine the quality and potential of American youth (DeHaan & Havignhurst, 1957). Later that same year, the Superior and Talented Student Project of the North Central Association began. It had two goals:

1. To find, develop, and implement procedures and programs in secondary schools to identify, guide, and motivate the maximum number of superior and talented students in all areas of school achievement.

2. To help those students plan for and acquire a thorough college education (p. 68).

DeHaan and Havighurst went on to explain the criteria used to identify those students:

1. an I.Q. of 110 or above
2. achievement test scores at the 75th percentile or above
3. grades of B or above
4. teacher recommendations
5. standardized reading score at the 50th percentile or above

A program to encourage outstanding Black students was begun in 1964--the National Achievement Scholarship Program (Witty, 1967). This program did not weigh the I.Q. as heavily as many programs because some felt that the I.Q. tests were unfair to minorities and were culturally biased. Although the assumption that the I.Q. was a valid measure of intelligence was vigorously challenged in the 1960's, it had been mentioned after the 1954 South Carolina desegregation case (Tannenbaum, 1981). Anderson (1961) said that an I.Q. test score was "a symptom of a child's learning potential, but is neither a complete nor an entirely reliable measure of the child's true potential" (p. 12). Whitmore (1980) said that many in the 1960's felt that use of the I.Q. test as the primary criterion for determining giftedness perpetuated and intensified "the old fear of undemocratic elitism and an intellectual aristocracy" (p. 15).

A book which satirized this elitism fear was The

Child Buyer by John Hersey, published in 1960. In it, a man from United Lymphomilloid Corporation is trying to buy all the brightest children so that his company can use their intelligence to solve the company's "extremely difficult problem, a project, a long-range government contract, fifty years, highly specialized and top secret" (p. 28). The book is written in the form of testimony given before a committee of senators. The following excerpt is from Miss Henley, the State Supervisor for Exceptional Children:

> Miss Henley: "Well, yes, I'd just like to say that where you run into trouble with these children is in singling them out. The kind of thing Dr. Gozar has done in the lab work with this boy. I came right out and said this in my lecture. We talk about the defense of democracy--how undemocratic can you get? Why shouldn't the next child get the extra help--the slow learner? The extremely gifted child should not be removed from the common-learning situation. He's the last one who needs extra attention. ...I may specialize in deviates, but I don't forget the norm. The norm is the bedrock of our society. You can't neglect the median child in favor of the exceptions. You remember F.D.R.'s great declaration: 'This is the era of the common man.' That's democracy, gentlemen! Not a society where you have an elite telling the rest of us how to live." (p. 123)

Some educators and politicians, though, felt that it was imperative to develop the talent of American youth. In 1962, the Governor's School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina opened. It was designed to provide a comprehensive program for gifted high school students.

(Witty, 1967). President Kennedy pledged to have a man on the moon by 1970 and he surrounded himself with scholars referred to as the "Whiz Kids" (Tannenbaum, 1981). Vernon, et al, (1977) said that it was "probable that the 1960's provided the most favourable climate of the twentieth century for special education of gifted American children" (p. 11).

By the end of the 1960's, there were those calling for some type of Federal legislation regarding gifted education. In 1970, a Congressional mandate added Section 806c to Public Law 91-230 (the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1969). Section 806c was "Provisions Related to Gifted and Talented Children" and it

> required the Commissioner of Education to determine the extent to which special educational assistance programs were necessary or useful to meet the needs of gifted and talented children, to evaluate how existing Federal educational assistance programs can be more effectively used to meet these needs, and to recommend new programs, if any, needed to meet these needs (Khatena, 1978, p. 39).

The Commissioner's Report stimulated interest in gifted education. A further increase in interest, in the mid-1970's, came as the country realized its need for leadership. Citizens became cognizant of the need for solutions to problems such as:

> overpopulation; diminishing natural resources; hunger, irreversible inflation, and unstable economies; corruption and crime; possible

> nuclear warfare and continuing wars; problems of gerontology, diseases, and handicapping conditions; a need for alternative sources of energy; possible space travel and development of communities in space; and many more (Whitmore, 1980, p. 7).

The early 1970's were the first time that anyone began calling for programs to provide early education for the gifted (Witty, 1971). Attention, though, was not just on early education for the gifted but also for early treatment and education of learning disabled and mentally deficient. As per usual, much more attention was paid to the other exceptional children rather than the gifted.

One cannot tell yet what will characterize the 1980's in terms of their position on gifted education. But, it would seem, with the current economic condition, and with the current President's view as it is on education in general, that the word, at least for the first half of the decade, may be "cutback." Hopefully, gifted students who have grown up to be gifted adults, will not let this happen.

RESEARCH REGARDING THE GIFTED

Research regarding the gifted has been conducted in the United States for over sixty years (Whitmore, 1980), since the 1920's when Terman initiated his longitudinal study (Witty, 1971). During the 1920's and

1930's, studies of genius, distinction, and eminence were predominant (Whitmore, 1980). Research dropped off during the 1940's and early 1950's, but then during the post-Sputnik era, there was a plethora of research into the characteristics and education of gifted children (Tannenbaum, 1981). Hildreth, in her 1966 text, reported that twenty times as much material was published between 1950 and 1960 on the subject of giftedness than in any previous ten year period. French, in his 1959 book of readings on the gifted, stated that 1957, 1958, and 1959 saw more articles published on gifted education than in the previous thirty years.

Whitmore (1980) said that as one reviews the research literature of the past sixty years, the extreme variability in quality can be seen. She says that the significant, long-term studies which Terman and other early leaders began, need to be revived and developed by newcomers in the field. She comments on the "lack of continuous systematic research efforts" on the gifted in the two decades between 1960 and 1980. Gowan (1977) offers that the "reason we find little development in the field is that the gifted-child movement is not really a discipline at all but merely an applied area of the measurement of individual differences" (p. 18).

Research seems to be expanding as some psychologists,

educators, and psychometricians begin to work together in the area. One dimension where the combined efforts could produce information is "society's need for the gifted." This area was suggested by Newland in 1976. Positive results of such research could cut down on the dramatic swings in the public's opinion of gifted education.

CAUSES OF UPSURGE AND DECLINE IN INTEREST IN THE GIFTED

Tannenbaum (1981) says that no other group in education "has been alternately embraced and repelled with so much vigor by educators and laymen alike" as have the gifted (p. 20). What are the reasons behind this push-pull affair with the gifted? It seems to basically boil down to four things: money, the sudden, intense need for a particular kind of "brain power," the current popular belief about education; and an elitism/egalitarianism struggle.

If one looks back over the past eighty to one hundred years, during the periods of economic hardship, gifted programs were among the first cut. Whether school districts or governments were giving lip-service to providing for the gifted or not, if the money was not there, neither was the commitment. Whitmore (1980) says

> Just as one may learn about the values of an individual by examining the person's calendar of time commitments and the checkbook, which reveals monetary investments, one may learn clearly about the prioritized values of a government and its schools by examining its appropriation of funds and the allocation of time to various needs (p. 20).

Although gifted children are the least costly of all exceptional children to provide for (Trezise, 1978), convincing taxpayers of that fact is next to impossible. They object to spending money on the gifted because it is believed that "they will get along anyway," but they are willing to finance education for the handicapped because "their life will be so difficult" and so they deserve it (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957; Vernon, Adamson, & Vernon, 1977).

Adler (1967) reflected that

> during periods of economic stress, as in a depression, there is little sympathy with exceptions, for 'frivolous spending.' Very often during such times there is confusion between ability and class. Special education for the gifted student is equated with special attention to the 'privileged' which is somehow 'undemocratic.' Equality, or at least equality being another name for standardized, becomes the desired goal. Socioeconomic class and special education for the gifted become confused in many minds. The bitter truth is that very often the gifted are hit the hardest by depression (p. 478).

One of the reasons for the association in some people's minds between gifted children and elitism and aristocracy stems from the time when public schools were first established. Many of the families with

bright children did not send them to public school, but continued sending them to private schools, having them privately tutored, or having them study with a mentor (Whitmore, 1980). Vernon et al (1977) supports this idea with their discussion of schools in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They relate that until well into the nineteenth century, the few children who were educated were those of wealthy families. The schools they attended had small classes and were ability grouped. Then public schools were established, and were seen as a unifying force for Americanizing the children of immigrants from many lands. This worked fine for awhile because the "dull and disinterested" could and did drop out. Those who were above average were usually academically motivated and were able to progress rapidly to the higher grades. But as more and more children stayed in school, especially as it became mandatory, the differences between the top and bottom students were quite marked, and some parents and educators began calling for special education.

Others though, were calling for egalitarian education. American society has tended to be suspicious of differences in children. It seems to prefer "well-rounded" children, in terms of their social and emotional adjustment and interests, rather than children who

distinguish themselves academically or artistically. Even in the 1970's,"'gifted' is associated with geniuses or young prodigies, and genius is traditionally, though unjustifiably, associated with neurosis, or even insanity" (Vernon, Adamson, & Vernon, 1977, p. 9).

Until very recently (within the last couple of years), parents generally did not want to have a talented and gifted child because society saw them as misfits (Barbe & Renzulli, 1981). In the book, The Child Buyer, previously mentioned, Miss Cloud, the librarian is being questioned by the district attorney:

> Mr. Broadbent: "Would you say that your, ahem, misfortune, madam, has made the boy Barry Rudd feel specially close to you, with his, ahem, exaggerated mentality?"
>
> Miss Cloud: "Why don't you come out from behind those euphemisms, Mr. District Attorney, or whatever you are? 'Misfortune?' You mean my hunch back? You mean that Barry's brilliant mind is like a crooked back, and that's why we're pals? Deformity is our bond? More like it that you have a twisted mind, sir." (p. 125)

Although this attitude has abated somewhat, it can still be found in America today. So too does the idea continue that gifted education is elitist. Switzer and Nourse (1979) comment that

> it is an interesting phenomenon that in an age such as ours, when so much attention in education is directed toward excluded minorities, so little attention is given to the education of the gifted (p. 323).

They go on to say that gifted students are the most

neglected minority--probably due to the idea that it is elitist to attend to gifted students' needs. What seems to be difficult for many people to resolve is the idea that democracy is indeed served by educating the gifted. Bagford (1981) said that educators understand that

> democracy in teaching means providing opportunities so that all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve according to their full potential. Being democratic to gifted children means that they, too, must receive their fair measure of special attention. To do otherwise wastes the nation's human resources (p. 1).

Those people who do not want to waste human resources know that "a good society cultivates its members, and by their fruits the society is made better" (Havighurst, et al, 1958, p. 9). The concern for exceptional human beings is an outgrowth of a concern for all human beings. This concern arose from the humanistic psychology movement of William James. According to Gowan (1977), humanistic psychology

> finds intrinsic value in the individual, who is considered as an end and not as a behavioristic means. He/She has potential for good, for development and for process that is much more important and much more germane than merely dealing with his quirks and ills (p. 7).

Humanists, and others who are concerned about people and whether or not they are receiving an education that cultivates excellence, do not always influence

policy as much as they would like. Sometimes it takes something that is more obviously in the public interest. Whitmore (1980) said that often public interest in the gifted is tied to society's need for leaders--political, scientific, etc. Passow (1958) pointed out that often a war substantiates the nation's need for highly trained personnel in specialized areas--and this may renew the country's attention toward educating the gifted to fill the talent reservoir.

> Awareness of the social value of gifted persons has been evidenced throughout recorded history, but interest in or commitment to facilitating development of giftedness has been inconsistent and dependent upon the society's prevailing values and need for leadership. It seems reasonable to say that when societies have recognized and responded to the needs of the gifted, it has not been because of respect for the rights and value of gifted persons but rather because of the utilitarian goals of the society, i.e., the need for political geniuses, scientists, and so forth. In other words, gifted persons have been used by societies, or ignored! In the 1800's, most of the interest was in child prodigies who were exploited for adult entertainment--perhaps to a criminal level by today's moral standards. In the Sputnik Era, Americans exerted intense psychological pressure upon gifted children, fording ever-increasing acceleration academically to bring pride and glory to the adult society, especially to parents and teachers. It seems accurate to say that no other group of American children, except the blacks, has suffered so much from misunderstanding of their needs, from lack of interest in them as persons, and from exploitation under great pressure to perform for the benefit of the society (p. 7).

Can a change be expected? Or will the gifted only

be wanted when a crisis evinces the fact that they are needed? If history is a reliable indicator, the gifted are soon due for a rejection.

READING INSTRUCTION FOR THE ACADEMICALLY GIFTED STUDENT

The word "instruction" is purposely used in the subtitle of this section. A gifted child does, in fact, need instruction in reading--s/he must be taught (Sumption & Luecking, 1960), even though gifted children are usually "good" readers. Trezise (1978) said that the best place to provide for academically gifted children was within the reading program.

Often, rather than being provided for in the reading program, gifted students have been ignored. Prior to 1950, the gifted were mostly neglected, but reading for the gifted was particularly overlooked (Witty, 1971). Even in 1957, as more attention was directed toward the gifted curriculum, and recommendations were made for adaptations in mathematics, foreign languages, science, and English (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957), no change was recommended for the reading curriculum.

In 1971, Barbe and Renzulli discussed the lack of advertence to reading for the gifted student:

> There is evidence that too little attention has been directed toward reading and reading

> programs for the gifted. Tisdall reviewed fifteen books on the education of the gifted and found that nine of the books made no reference to reading either in the table of contents or in the index. Of the remaining six books, three devoted no more than five pages each to the subject of reading, two devoted between five and ten pages, and only one contained a major-length discussion on this important subject. Tisdall concluded that the material on reading represented a total of approximately 1.35 percent of the total content of these fifteen books on the gifted.
>
> Historically, there has been a continuing, if minimal, amount of interest in the gifted child and his reading. Terman early studied the reading of gifted children, as did Witty. Witty's interest has continued as he reported periodically on the gifted and his reading. Strang and Barbe, also, have written on this topic. Considering the importance of reading to the gifted, the paucity of interest is difficult to understand (p. 20).

Probably the reason for the dearth of information on reading and the gifted is because the academically gifted usually excel in reading (Jacobs, 1963; Witty, 1971). Of the students in his longitudinal study, Terman said, "Their superiority in reading was especially noteworthy" (Witty, 1958, p. 44). Klemm's survey (reported in Fliegler & Bish, 1959) of elementary reading programs in thirty-seven cities showed that scores for gifted students were two to four years above the grade norms.

Another characteristic of gifted students is their interest in reading (Jacobs, 1963). "Love of and frequent engagement in reading" is associated with gifted

learners (Alexander & Muia, 1982, p. 46). Gifted students tend to be voracious readers (Congdon, 1980), much more so than average children (DeHaan & Havighurst, 1957). According to Cushenbery and Howell, (1974)

> interest and skill in reading usually are typical of the gifted child. These youngsters tend to read more and in a wider variety of areas than the average child. Children with superior ability also have the capacity to put more into their reading and thus to get more out of it. However, without guidance and a planned program, maximal growth rarely will occur. Study has shown that the gifted often read below their mental age potential (p. 54).

Labuda (reported in Switzer & Nourse, 1979) stresses that most gifted students are remedial if that classification is based on the difference between a student's capacity and his/her reading achievement.

Although the majority of academically gifted students are good readers, not all fit that stereotype (Callow, 1980). This may be due to a lack of exposure to books and other reading materials that keeps some bright students from being good readers (Maker, 1982), or it may just keep them from reading early.

There are conflicting reports about when gifted children begin reading. Witty (1971), reports on a study done by Victor and Mildren Goertzel for which they chose four hundred persons, acknowledged as eminent by the large numbers of biographies recently written about them. One of the Goertzels' conclusions about

their eminent persons' childhoods was that "they showed their greatest superiority in reading ability; many read at the age of four. Almost all were early readers of good books" (p. 113).

Terman's longitudinal study reported similar findings. Forty-five percent (45%) of his group started to read before entering school (Terman & DeVoss, 1924).

Witty (1958) says that one of the characteristics of gifted children is "the early development of the ability to read" (p. 49). Sumption and Luecking (1960) posit that about 50% of the gifted children read before entering school. "Frequently gifted children read at a very young age...and learn to read with very little adult assistance (Wooster, 1978, p. 35). Nelson and Cleland (1981) concur and believe that gifted youngsters learn to read before receiving formal instruction in school by their "high interest, extraordinary discrimination and generalizing abilities" (p. 419).

On the other hand, Cassidy and Vukelich (1980) did an experiment and found that only 17-23% of the gifted preschool population actually reads before beginning Kindergarten. They also found that the "degree of giftedness" (mean I.Q.) of the early readers was not significantly greater than the young non-readers degree of giftedness. Durkin's (1966) two studies of early readers found that the median I.Q.'s were

121 for the California group and 133 for the New York group.

Cassidy and Vukelich (1980) said that a surprising finding of their study was that even though the young gifted children possessed the measurable readiness skills and high intelligence necessary to learn to read quickly when given instruction, they did not necessarily do so. They said that perhaps the children

> need to perceive reading as a functional skill. They need to feel that they can gain information or enjoyment from reading. Until they come to this realization, the reading process offers little challenge to their rapidly growing and expanding intellects (p. 582).

Because of their rapidly expanding intellects, gifted children need to be provided with an "abundance of reading material" (Nelson & Cleland, 1981, p. 420). And, because gifted students' reading interests span a wide range of subjects, they also must be provided with a diversity of reading matter (Laurence, 1980). Teachers of the gifted often have "collections of otherwise fugitive materials in addition to pamphlets and booklets that can be ready by their students" (Sumption & Luecking, 1960, p. 207). Terman and Oden (1976) reported on a study done where information was obtained from 511 gifted students and 808 regular students. The students were to keep records for two months of the books that they read. Terman and Oden said

> Classification of the books read showed the gifted children reading over a considerably wider range than the control children. The gifted, much more than the control group, preferred science, history, biography, travel, poetry, drama, and informational science (p. 61).

Congdon (1980) reports that gifted children like to collect and read reference books. Early on, gifted children have an "interest in or liking for books and later enjoyment of atlasses, dictionaries, and encyclopedias" (Witty, 1958, p. 49). Senior high school gifted students read "extensively in many kinds of books and periodicals (Witty, 1958, p. 53). Gifted readers, young or old, are likely to read more advanced, often adult material, that is of higher literary quality than their less intelligent peers (Jacobs, 1963; Maker, 1982).

"The reading needs of the gifted and creative differ in many respects from those of other groups" (Labuda, 1974, p. 6), and for that reason, gifted students must have a differentiated reading program. Barbe and Renzulli (1971) said that "planned differentiation of reading instruction is necessary if the gifted and creative are to receive the type of education they both need and deserve" (p. 19). Trezise (1978) says that the differences in a reading program for the gifted are "in regard to timing and pacing, depth and degree, teaching style and materials, and

student response" (p. 743). There are certain elements that a program for gifted readers must contain and certain elements that it must not.

It must be "book-based." There should be an emphasis on literature in the program (Bagford, 1981). An individualized approach using children's books (and other trade books) is much preferred to a basal approach. Using books as the basis for the program makes it more feasible to individualize, as a gifted readers' program needs to be to meet the needs of the readers (Cushenbery and Howell, 1974).

> The world of children's literature should be an intrinsic part of any reading program. But in a reading program for the gifted, trade books should become the basals (Trezise, 1978, p. 746).

A gifted children's reading program must not be a traditional basal program. Although the general effectiveness of any reading program depends upon its interpretation and use,

> A basal reading program is less effective with youngsters of superior ability because of the content and vocabulary control exercised and the usually strict adherence to restricting vertical sequence progression to grade levels. The vocabulary and content control limits the opportunities in a reading program for learning up to potential, for creating intrinsic motivation and, especially at the primary levels, for experience with good literature. The attribute of being a rapid learner receives little recognition in the rigid enforcement of the grade level sequence structure of the basal reading program (Cushenbery and Howell, 1974, p. 55).

Verbally gifted children need appropriate reading experiences from the first day of school (Witty, 1971). Since many of them have already been reading and/or experiencing through books, they must have something other than a pre-primer. Sumption and Luecking (1960) point out that

> No child who has learned to read, and who has read for himself in the interesting books that are being published for beginning readers, can be expected to be satisfied for any length of time to read about a dog and a cat, or a boy and a girl, whose conversation consists of "Oh!" "Look!" "See!" and other such absorbing comments (p. 352).

Gifted young readers must have routine basal instruction replaced by a balanced program which is adapted to their differences in abilities and interests (Witty, 1971). Trezise (1978) says it well:

> A youngster in the first grade who has high-level cognitive ability, who is acquiring the word attack skills with ease, and who may already be considering such questions as "Whither mankind?" is not likely to take kindly to the content of introductory readers (p. 745).

They also will not take kindly to endless phonics drills, so a reading program for the gifted must be comprehension-oriented. Even at the earliest stages, the emphasis should be on comprehension skills (Sellin & Birch, 1980), with word attack instruction held to a minimum (Trezise, 1978).

Gifted readers do not need a low-level word

recognition skill-oriented program. Phonics, sight words, context cues, and structural analysis are the least difficult dimensions of reading for gifted students (Sellin & Birch, 1980). Fliegler and Bish (1959) reported that Schubert studied responses from 86 junior high school students about how they read. He ascertained that the students "appeared to make adequate use of the dictionary and contextual cues but profited little from structural cues or phonetic analysis" (p. 418). It seems then, that the highly structured, closely sequenced, systematic skill development program is not the approach gifted students need for their reading instruction (Bagford, 1981). Trezise (1978) believes that type of program

> May be quite inappropriate for gifted children since these students often learn so quickly that they seem to pass right over most of the sequenced objectives, take inexplicable cognitive leaps, and learn best by a series of complex mental associations that do not synchronize well with tightly structured programs (p. 744).

The type of program they do need must be an in-depth, broad-based programs. Gensley (1975) said that

> Reading for the gifted should be a process of gathering information, interpreting information, processing information, analyzing information, synthesizing information, evaluating information, and using information (p. 21).

Gifted readers must be given room and opportunity to read, gather, interpret, process, analyze, synthesize,

evaluate, and use information. They need a chance to develop higher cognitive abilities through a program with strong emphasis on content and values, where they are grouped with other gifted students, and where they are given an opportunity for self-development (Bagford, 1981). This can not happen in a shallow program. Trezise says that

> Comprehensive reading programs seldom take into account the needs of the most gifted students. ...simply creating a 'top reading group' and then proceeding with these youngsters with essentially the usual kind of reading instruction does not constitute an adequate response to the special reading needs of gifted students (p. 743).

To respond to the needs of gifted readers is not an easy task (Woolcock, 1963). It involves a great deal of planning and guidance (Cassidy, 1980), but it is what these students need and deserve.

Although creative and critical reading should be a part of all reading programs, they must be the backbone of a reading program for the gifted.

> For the gifted child, reading can be a catalyst to creative thinking, critical thinking, self awareness, decision-making and problem-solving skills. Because they more quickly master the mechanical basics, they can be guided to reach and stretch (Wooster, 1978, p. 35-36).

Guided readers must be guided and taught. They do not teach themselves the higher levels of reading and thinking. A good teacher develops a reading

program for students that focuses "mainly on developing their critical and creative abilities, with reading being the mode of instruction" (Trezise, 1978, p. 746).

Cushenbery and Howell (1974) say that direct teaching of critical reading is necessary. "Critical reading is reading beyond the level of comprehension; it requires that the reader evaluate the material in terms of truth, authority, and value to fit his own purpose" (p. 69). All readers need this skill, but for gifted readers, critical reading is particularly important because they tend to be voracious readers, and so need to be able to sort through the volumes of material they read, critically. "Critical thinking and critical reading must lead to conclusions upon which one can act. Creative criticism does not result in a vacuum or intellectual statement" (DeBoer, 1963, p. 441). The teacher must help channel the students' actions as they develop and use their critical reading skills. This is where much of the teaching comes in. Switzer and Nourse (1979) say that "the gifted child must be taught to read and think critically to reach their full potential" (p. 329). Beginning in the intermediate grades and continuing through high school, gifted children need extra experience in critical reading (Witty, 1971). This will also

give the bright students additional practice in thinking since "reading is a thinking process necessary for obtaining meaning from the printed word" (Cassidy, 1980, p. 1).

At a higher level even than critical reading is creative reading (Barbe, 1974). Cushenbery and Howell (1974) describe creative reading "as a process in which the printed page serves as the source for imaginative and original thought production by the reader" (p. 71). The reason it is the highest level reading skill is because of the thinking processes involved.

> We may consider creative reading to be a thinking process in which new ideas are originated, evaluated, and applied. Divergent and varied responses, not right answers, are goals as thinking transpires and conclusions are reached. Finally, the pupil evaluates his conclusions and seeks to extend and use them (Witty, 1974, p. 15).

One can see how creative and critical reading could--and should--be closely "taught." Unfortunately, creative reading is almost completely neglected in the classroom (Cramond & Martin, 1981; Witty, 1971). More than other types of reading skills, the "teaching" of creative reading hinges on the teacher's attitude. The teacher must model openness, flexibility, acceptance, questioning, divergent thinking, inquiry, etc. The teacher must model these behaviors because these are the characteristics of a creative reader. In Witty,

(1971) Torrance says

> When a person reads creatively, he is sensitive to problems and possibilities in whatever he reads. He makes himself aware of the gaps in knowledge, the unsolved problems, the missing elements, things that are incomplete or out of focus. To resolve this tension, so important in the creative thinking process, the creative reader sees new relationships, creates new combinations, synthesizes relatively unrelated elements into a coherent whole, redefines or transforms certain pieces of information to discover new uses, and builds onto what is known (p. 15).

The modeling is also important because one cannot directly "teach" creative reading. The teacher can however, help the child "assume attitudes toward the printed page which will effectively promote the kind of independence and active response necessary for creative reading" (DeBoer, 1963, p. 437). All readers bring to the page a body of values, information, and experience. The creative reader must be willing to go the the printed page without his or her mind already "fixed," i.e. with previous views and beliefs dominating his or her reading, or the author will be unable to communicate with the reader (DeBoer, 1963). No thinking is taking place in that kind of reading, i.e. where the mind is set before one ever "reads" a word. And, it certainly is not creative reading, because

> Creative reading resembles creative thinking in that it helps the reader gain new insights by enabling him to evaluate an hypothesis and reach a conclusion. Thus,

> the creative reader employs reading in various types of thinking. He goes beyond the facts and considers their meanings, implications, and usefulness (Witty, 1974, p. 17).

Since many people look to the gifted children of today as the future leaders and problem-solvers of the nation, it is imperative that they be guided and allowed to be creative readers and thinkers. They must develop the ability to read and make "an active response which extends beyond the literal meaning or the answers found in textbooks" (Witty, 1974, p. 17). Leading the nation and helping solve the problems of the world in the future will require, among other things, a great deal of creativity. Toynbee (quoted by Witty, 1971b, p. 115) said

> To give a fair chance to potential creativity is a matter of life and death for any society. This is all-important, because the outstanding creative ability of a fairly small percentage of the population is mankind's ultimate capital asset, and the only one with which only Man has been endowed.

DeBoer (1963) says that creative reading has one purpose in common with other types of creative effort:

> To combine and recombine the materials of language to achieve a meaningful result. This means that (1) the creative reader is an active agent, not merely a passive recipient; (2) he is a seeker and an experimenter; and (3) he is both a builder and a leveler (p. 435).

The nation does not need any more passive recipients

--in reading or anywhere else. But people who can think creatively, which implies actively, are needed.

Depending on the degree of giftedness and task commitment, there is almost no limit to what a gifted youngster can learn in his/her lifetime--and no limit to the contributions which s/he can make in society. Much of the learning may come about through reading. FOr this reason, Cushenbery and Howell (1974) say

> The gifted child should be encouraged to develop his reading ability so he can get an early start on acquiring the concepts and knowledge on which further understandings are developed. Proficiency in reading skills affords the gifted child a high degree of independence in learning (p. 22).

Encouraging wide reading in gifted students is important (Witty, 1971a; Witty, 1971b). They should learn that reading is for learning and for enjoyment. "Books are an important aspect of the growth of a youngster, particularly a gifted one" (Sumption & Luecking, 1960, p. 309). It is essential to share books aloud with gifted children before and after they can read for themselves (Polette, 1982).

> From very early years up to the time when they become really fluent readers, bright children enjoy being read to, or told stories--either of a fantastic or fairy-tale nature, or accounts of what happened to the parents when they were young, or stories of animals' or young people's adventures. They can be introduced, too, to considerably more advanced literature than they would be able to appreciate for themselves till many years later. In

> addition to the emotional content of stories (e.g. expressing and resolving fears and anxieties) they add to his knowledge of words and sentence structures, and hasten the desire to read for himself (Vernon, Adamson, & Vernon, 1977, p. 134).

There are those who warn against too much reading for the gifted. Witty (1951, p. 40) says that "Preoccupation with books should not be allowed to cut the child off from contacts with reality." Sumption and Luecking (1960) say to beware of allowing the gifted child's reading interest to become too intense, i.e. to the exclusion of social activities. They say this can lead to "introversion, shyness, and even an anti-social attitude" (p. 114). Leta S. Hollingworth (1976) who did the majority of her extensive work with "severely gifted children (I.Q. 160+) warns that

> The deep interest in reading which typifies the gifted child may further his isolation. Irwin believes that reading should be deferred in the education of the highly intelligent. "I believe it is especially important that intellectual children get a grasp on reality through real experiences in making and doing things before they are even introduced to the wonders that lie within books." From this point of view, the development of the physical, social, and emotional aspects of personality would have first attention in the education of a gifted child, the intellectual being fostered last of all because it comes of itself and is too likely to run away with the other three and lead to isolation (p. 96).

Whatever one's perspective about gifted readers, it should be obvious that they have unique needs. They usually master reading skills earlier than other students,

and often possess a great deal of independence in their reading (Jacobs, 1963; Sanacore, 1981). To meet these students' reading needs, a differentiated reading program must be established. Barbe and Renzulli (in Witty, 1971a) quoted Tisdall who articulated the following twelve specific needs which he feels must be stressed in a reading program for the gifted:

1. Differentiation of instruction is imperative.

2. Regular and careful evaluation of the child's reading ability and achievement is called for.

3. Proper grouping for instruction is needed.

4. The readiness program must be adapted to the child and his needs.

5. The gifted pupil needs to be involved in reading instruction.

6. Differentiation of reading style according to the type and purpose of material read is necessary.

7. An ever-increasing range of reading material must be made available to the gifted pupil.

8. The gifted child needs guidance in critical reading.

9. Intellectually superior students must be challenged if learning is to take place and interest in learning maintained.

10. The gifted child needs continuity in reading instruction throughout his school career.

11. The gifted child needs and can obtain a realization of self-fulfillment through reading.

12. Gifted children need superior teachers. (p. 21).

In looking at the above list, one is struck with the thought "Well, that's what we would want for all children--e.g. careful evaluation, proper grouping, continuous reading instruction, superior teachers, etc." But, maybe the reason this list had to be articulated is because of the severe lack of attention that has been paid to gifted students in general, and gifted readers in particular.

Early studies of the gifted showed that the regular curriculum was not serving the gifted students adequately because "as they grew older, the attainment of many pupils grew less commensurate with their early promise" (Witty, 1971b, p. 110). So, it would seem that curricula for gifted students need to be developed that can more adequately serve them, particularly in reading. The goals of such curricula will not differ so much in kind as in degree (Jacobs, 1963). Both long-term and intermediate goals must be set forth. Polette (1982) says two long-term goals should be

1. to create readers in the full, meaningful sense of the word.

2. to expand the child's reading, writing, speaking, and thinking vocabulary (p. 39).

Cushenbery and Howell (1974) list other goals for a gifted learner's reading program. They say that such a program should result in:

1. reading fluency achieved through the mastery of applying decoding skills;

2. highly developed comprehension skills which provide for deeper insight and greater awareness of subtleties and nuances of meaning as well as a greater depth and breadth of knowledge in content and interest areas;

3. the skill to evaluate reading matter in terms of authenticity, validity, and objectivity before forming an opinion or determining its usability;

4. the ability to differentiate between good and mediocre literature in terms of literary criteria and to display a pronounced preference for the better literature;

5. the skill to efficiently and effectively compile and organize information from a variety of sources and the ability to locate materials on topics of particular interest;

6. an increased awareness of and the ability to do creative thinking fostered through creative reading;

7. the recognition and use of reading as a source of enjoyment. (p. 54-55).

The goals mentioned above are not really different from those set for every child. The distinction comes from the "depth of understanding sought, the experiences and activities used, the materials and teaching methods employed, and the rate for which learning is planned and achieved" (Cushenbery & Howell, 1974, p. 55). The first and last word of that quote are the most significant in terms of how goals for gifted readers should be determined. Academically talented and gifted students should be expected to go

far beyond the point that "average" readers do, and so their program must be developed to ensure that. And, they can be expected to achieve. In many reading programs, "ultimate" goals are set--but very few students can or do attain them. But with gifted readers, students can and should attain the goals, and some will exceed them.

Knowing that gifted readers are different, and that because they are different, they need and deserve a specially designed reading program, should present a marvelous challenge to teachers and curriculum writers. The challenge is worth every effort. If the efforts are made, a writer in the 1990's will not be able to say, as Sellin and Birch (1980, p. 3) did: "only a few talented and gifted kids receive satisfactory educations--excellent educations are received by even fewer."

By the 1990's, gifted students should be receiving the type of reading instruction that will allow them to think and achieve in every arena. Their education should be more than satisfactory--it should be excellent--and attention to the reading program is the best place to begin making it excellent.

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